

MARKET UPDATE

Kitchen Cabinet Trends Marry Style With Function

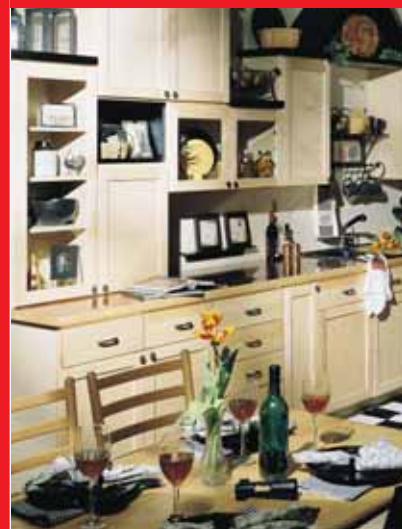
The U.S. Kitchen Cabinets & Countertops Manufacturing industry recently released its *2009 Trendology* report, which conducts a trend analysis in kitchen cabinets and kitchen countertops. According to the report, frivolous is out and functionality is in. But this doesn't mean quality is sacrificed. Quite to the contrary, kitchen cabinet manufacturers are marrying style and function, with a price point to match every budget. Furniture-grade materials and custom add-ons are hot. Consumers are looking for

particular features that match their lifestyles: pull-out waste cans and recycling centers, slide-out towel bars and pull-down shelves, sink base door storage units and paper towel holders are just some examples. Wood species, finishes, storage solutions and moldings will all factor into the cost of kitchen cabinets. Tell us about your project. We know the trends in kitchen cabinets and what buyers are looking for. Talk to us when you have questions.



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Building On Service

October 2009



Characteristics Of New Housing Highlights Of The Annual U.S. Census Report

Each year the U.S. Census reports on the characteristics of new housing. This year's report (encompassing homes built the previous year) included some notable highlights:

- The average single-family house completed had 2,534 square feet, 779 more square feet than in 1978.
- Fiber cement, as a principal type of exterior wall material, is reported separately for the first time. It was used to build 12% of new single-family homes sold nationally. It is primarily used in the West.
- Single-family homes with four or more bedrooms accounted for 36% of new construction, an increase of 10 percentage points from 1978.
- In single-family homes with four

- or more bedrooms, nearly 60% had three bathrooms or more.
- Single-family homes with three or more bathrooms accounted for 27% of new construction, which more than doubled the rate from 1988.
- Forty percent of new single-family homes sold fell within the price range of \$150,000 to \$249,999. Most of these homes were sold in the Midwest and the South.
- Nearly 90% of all single-family homes completed had AC.
- Nearly 20% of new single-family homes sold had at least a 3-or-more-car garage; 70% of homes sold had a 2-car garage.
- Across the country, over half of all single family homes sold had at least one fireplace.

- Sixteen percent of all new single-family homes sold were financed by an FHA loan, up from 4% for the years 2005 through 2007.

For more highlights from the U.S. Census report, visit www.census.gov/const/www/highanncharac2008.html.

On The Inside

- The Next Building Boom
- Kitchen Design Trends
- Building Trends: Does Choice Of Color Really Matter?
- Best Practices: Bathroom "Fix-Up" Ideas

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BUILDING TRENDS

How much does a choice of color matter? Quite a bit, according to research by the Color Marketing Group. When it comes to cabinetry, “the global color palette has been drifting toward the gray hues for some time ... blues and greens have become more subdued ... the wise investor is careful to select colors that are up-to-date, yet will be timeless classics.”



WEB SITE TO VISIT

WWW.CENSUS.GOV

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. They honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct their work openly.

INDUSTRY NEWS

The Next Building Boom Is Just Around The Corner

Most economists agree: the worst is behind us. That's not to say everything is going to be peaches and cream going forward. For the building industry in particular, it's a whole new world. It might be a few years before we see 1.4 million new homes sold in a single year (2005). But that doesn't mean we won't see that kind of growth again; indeed, builders are positioning themselves now to take advantage of opportunities that lie just around the corner.

Those opportunities center on three demographics expected to drive the housing market into the next decade: *Immigrants, Baby Boomers and Millennials*. You can read in greater detail the fundamentals behind the future building boom at www.builderonline.com/brave-new-world/.

The report outlines the potential that exists in the immigrant housing market (40 million strong and counting) and what buyers are looking for in their new homes (hint: family focus). Likewise, the Baby Boomers will remain a driving force in the housing market, but for different reasons. Boomers approaching retirement are looking to downsize, but want to maintain quality and comfort. The newest buying group on the block, Millennials (the generation born between the late 1970s and early 1990s) are looking for urban, affordable, well-designed dwellings that fit their very social lifestyles.

Every buyer is different. Talk to us when you have questions about any building products.

PRODUCT NEWS

Kitchen Design Trends For All Markets

The kitchen remains a focal point in every home regardless of the “type” of buyer (see article on facing page). For that reason, the kitchen design should always warrant careful attention.

Across the board, “green” is in. And that doesn't mean green cabinets. It means employing sustainable products and energy-efficient appliances. Installing Energy Star-rated appliances can reduce electricity consumption by 15-50%. (Check out the new induction cook tops for even added savings). Flooring choices range from bamboo to eucalyptus to cork. Each of these woods is considered a renewable resource, with about half the growing time of other woods.

When it comes to cabinetry, the look is more modern, using full overlay doors and European styling. (See “Building Trends” for color options). The sleeker look of stainless cabinets is also in. Or how about this idea? Open shelving. Of course, you wouldn't want open shelving in an entire kitchen. But in a tiny niche or odd corner, open shelving can hold real appeal.

When it comes to countertops, the choice is often between quartz and granite. Both have their advantages, though lately consumers have been drawn more to quartz with its stain-fighting ability and anti-bacterial (Microban) features.

Whatever kitchen you're building, for whatever market, talk to us when you have questions.

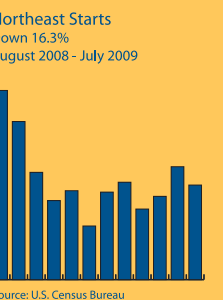
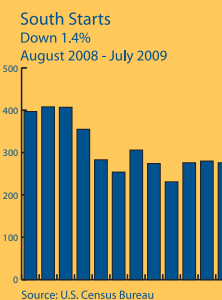
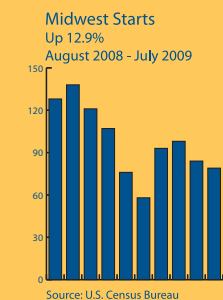
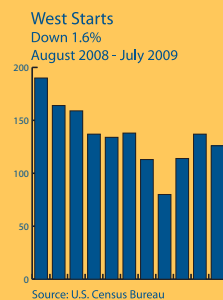
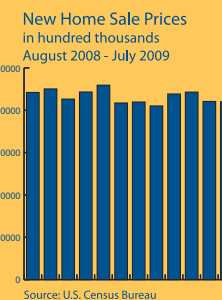
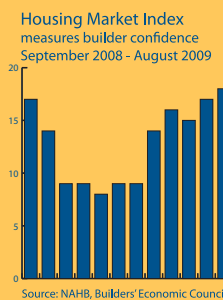
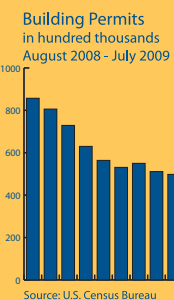


BEST PRACTICES

Bathroom “Fix-Up” Ideas

- Install double showerheads with body jets.
- Choose deep-soaking tubs with a seamless look.
- Streamline vanity countertops, sink, drawers and cabinetry by mounting directly to the wall, creating a “floating” above-the-ground image.
- Add sconces to vanity mirrors to make grooming easier, while eliminating unflattering shadows.
- Think jewel-toned artisan fixtures and glass tiles for a truly elegant look.
- Consider radiant heat flooring.
- And if you really want to go over-the-top, install towel warming drawers.

Market Trends



Regional Housing Starts

In thousands of units. August 2008 - September 2009